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Viewing cable 07CAIRO197, MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD PARLIAMENTARY BLOC LEADER CALLS

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07CAIRO197**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07CAIRO197	2007-01-24 16:09	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/9135>
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/9164>
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 CAIRO 000197

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NSC FOR WATERS AND DORAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/24/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD PARLIAMENTARY BLOC LEADER CALLS
FOR DIALOGUE WITH USG

REF: A. 06 CAIRO 7171

[1](#)B. CAIRO 144

Classified By: Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone,
for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The parliamentary leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) made a recent public statement indicating a desire to initiate a "constructive dialogue" with Western governments, including the USG. Meanwhile, opposition press and Cairo think tanks are rife with rumors that some recently arrested senior MB members were advocating for direct dialogue with the USG directly prior to their arrests. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On December 15, the MB's English-language website (ikhwanweb.com) posted a lengthy statement by Dr. Saad al

Katatni, head of the MB's parliamentary bloc (full text of statement at para 4), calling for dialogue between the MB and Western governments. Some of his key points:

-- "There is really no other alternative for the West or Islamists but to engage in a constructive dialogue to reach a common ground based on the mutual understanding and the appreciation of diversity ... we are not satisfied with the status quo in the relations between the Islamists and the Westerners, and we strongly believe that a constructive dialogue is within reach ..."

-- "Islamists need to revisit their views on the West ... Islamists have to realize that the West is not fundamentally anti-Islamic, and that some pro-democratic movements in the West are in fact willing to engage in dialogue and maintain relations with moderate Islamists ... Western governments, especially those of the EU and the United States, must present a clear vision regarding the democratization process in the Middle East and their willingness to respect the choice of the people in free elections regardless of the outcome ..."

-- "We should work together in a civilized manner to reach a common ground on our differences without resorting to arrogant force or hateful violence. Consequently, Western governments need to answer a decisive question: What do they really expect from Islamists? In what formula will the West accept Islamists as partners? The West needs to identify a clear set of conditions upon which it is willing to deal with the Islamists instead of giving them an endless list of demands ..."

-- "Western intellectuals, politicians, and policy makers need to realize the consequences of their policies in the Middle East, both in the long and short term. Propping up oppressive regimes will undermine the opportunity for peaceful change and reform and will reinforce the sentiment of radical Islamists, whose cause will become more popular as the support enjoyed by the moderates is not translated into political gain ..."

13. (C) In recent weeks the opposition press has carried allegations that some recently detained MB leaders had been openly advocating dialogue with the USG prior to their arrests (detentions reported reftels). According to this speculation, currently detained Second Deputy Supreme Guide Khairat al Shatir and Guidance Council member Mohamed Ali Beshr had been pushing within the MB bureaucracy for direct dialogue with the U.S. Embassy, prior to being arrested. While academics at the Al Ahram Center have also raised this gossip with poloff, we have no basis on which to gauge the authenticity of such reports.

14. (U) Begin text of Saad al Katatni statement:

Dialogue Between Islamists and the West a Necessity

Over the past several years, the relationship between the West and Islamic movements has become of vital importance, for several reasons. First, the Islamic movements have been on the rise in several Muslim countries for the past decade, but more so for the past few years. Both radical and moderate Islamic movements have been gaining more momentum, and have proved) in their own way - to be key players in the political arena in Arab and Muslim worlds. Despite the ongoing crackdowns by regimes, moderate Islamic movements have successfully continued their peaceful struggle, and gained more popular support. Radical movements, on the other hand, have sharpened their capabilities and carried out more deadly terrorist attacks in several countries.

The rise of Islamic movements could have been of minimal significance to Western societies, just as was the rise of the conservative right wing groups in the United States, for example, to the people of the Middle East a century ago. However, in the age of globalization where different corners of the world are interconnected, and in some cases

interdependent, building mutual understanding is of the utmost importance to the interest of all parties and to global peace.

Current relations between the Islamists and the West are not in their best possible shape. Several obstacles hinder the development of strong, healthy relations between both sides. The West's support of oppressive regimes in the Middle East is one of the major reasons behind Islamists, growing skepticism of the West's genuine belief in democracy. The provoking example is the Hamas-led government, which has been democratically elected by the Palestinian people only to find itself under siege by the international community led by the United States and Europe. This act clearly illustrates a huge gap between the West's political discourse and its political action in reality, a gap that undermines the trust between Islamists and the West.

Western governments have been supporting authoritarian regimes in the region despite their flagrant violations of basic human rights and their lack of commitment to political and social reform. Moreover, the West continues to support the Egyptian regime despite the crimes it is committing against its political opponents, especially during the recent parliamentary elections in November 2005 where 11 voters were killed by police, and tens of others injured in order to prevent them from casting their votes. In addition, the imprisonment of political opposition leaders like Ayman Nour, Talaat al Sadat, and hundreds of Islamists including prominent, moderate and well known figures such as Dr. Esam el Eryan and Dr. Mohamed Morsi. The West also supported the regime in its standoff against judges, journalists, lawyers, workers, students, and other active elements of the civil society. At most, the Western governments publicly condemned the regime's harsh crackdowns, but never really pressured it for any real change on the ground.

In the post-9/11 world, the rise of the conservative right in Western countries, such as the United States and some Scandinavian countries, and its influence over policy makers and the electoral process in general, added fuel to the tension between Islamists and Western governments. The conservative movements not only mistakenly branded all Islamists with terrorism, but also accused the moderate ones of working secretly to conquer the West and re-establish the Caliphate, and consequently rejected any dialogue with them. Therefore, a growing state of "Islamophobia" has been on the rise in the West, which created an unhealthy atmosphere for many Muslim minorities living in these very societies who have been subject to discrimination and racial profiling.

Another reason behind the unhealthy relations between Islamists and the West is the refusal by many intellectuals and policy makers in the West to recognize the clear ideological difference between moderate and radical Islamists, insisting on lumping all of them together in one basket. In a recent poll conducted by Zogby International, fifty percent of Americans surveyed did not see any difference between the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda, which is a clear indication of the misinformation prevailing in Western societies about our movement.

Finally, yet more importantly, one should not underestimate the effect of regimes in the Middle East in destroying the relations between the West and Islamists. As part of their survival strategies in power, these regimes try to monopolize their relations with the West, portraying their political opponents as undemocratic and anti-western who pose a threat to their interests, and therefore the regimes appear to the West as their "best alternative."

Having said that, one has to ask the most crucial question; could there be a constructive dialogue between Islamists, the United States and the European Union? If yes, then how such a dialogue can take place?

The answer to the first half of the question has to be yes.

There is really no other alternative for the West or Islamists but to engage in a constructive dialogue to reach a common ground based on the mutual understanding and the appreciation of diversity. For such dialogue to be fruitful, openness and sincerity on both sides are a necessity.

Islamists need to revisit their views on the West. They have to come to realize that different views can be present in one single Western society. Islamists have to realize that the West is not fundamentally anti-Islamic, and that some pro-democratic movements in the West are in fact willing to engage in dialogue and maintain relations with moderate Islamists, and accept the fact that Islamists and Islamic movements in general are the reflection of the people's true will.

Islamists also need to overcome the obstacles put forward by the regimes and to reach out to the West explaining their views regarding issues that are of concern to Westerners. Islamists also need to present a clear and unambiguous vision about how the Western presence in the region (on the economic, political, cultural and military levels) will change if the Islamists were to come to power. So far, Islamists' views on these issues have been distorted, either by the media or by Islamists themselves in their inability to communicate their agenda in a Western-friendly format, and even sometimes by the regimes, or special interest groups opposing the rise of Islamists.

Western governments, especially those of the EU and the United States, must present a clear vision regarding the democratization process in the Middle East and their willingness to respect the choice of the people in free elections regardless of the outcome. Such a clear vision has to be reflected in policies not just hollow promises and slogans.

The West also needs to come to a realization that there will always be differences between the Islamists and the Westerners. However, Islamists will not impose their beliefs or way of life on Westerners just as Westerners should refrain from doing the same on Islamists. We both need to be culturally sensitive to each other's preferences and respect our differences in realizing that diversity will continue to exist, and is a part of the human experience.

We should work together in a civilized manner to reach a common ground on our differences without resorting to arrogant force or hateful violence. Consequently, Western governments need to answer a decisive question: What do they really expect from Islamists? In what formula will the West accept Islamists as partners? The West needs to identify a clear set of conditions upon which it is willing to deal with the Islamists instead of giving them an endless list of demands. Western intellectuals, politicians, and policy makers need to realize the consequences of their policies in the Middle East, both in the long and short term. Propping up oppressive regimes will undermine the opportunity for peaceful change and reform and will reinforce the sentiment of radical Islamists, whose cause will become more popular as the support enjoyed by the moderates is not translated into political gain.

Inevitably, the spread of radicalism will be manifested in terrorist attacks, both inside and outside the Middle East. New generations of frustrated and repressed individuals in the Middle East will resort to terrorism, which will be impossible to defeat in the so-called "war on terror". This "neo-terrorism" has already begun to take shape with the recent attacks that took place in Dahab, Sharm el Sheikh, Amman, just to name a few. The concern is that if tensions continue to mount due to oppression practiced by authoritarian regimes and sanctioned by their Western allies, terrorist attacks will be on the rise and will be a plague across the world.

The West needs also to realize that, sooner or later, the will of the people will be victorious, as it was already in

various parts of the world, and Islamists will eventually come to power, yet, they could come to power in completely different terms. If the West continues to support authoritarian and undemocratic regimes, and exclude Islamists from the political process, further stripping them of their ability to govern democratically, it will create an unhealthy and hostile relations between the West and Muslim countries in which Islamists assume partial or total power. Mutual skepticism will turn into distrust and the world will witness another phase of instability that threatens an imminent clash of civilizations. On the other hand, if the Islamists come to power in a context where there is a mutual understanding between them and the Westerners, there would be a larger possibility of building strong relations that reserve the interests of both sides.

To conclude, we say that we are not satisfied with the status quo in the relations between the Islamists and the Westerners, and we strongly believe that a constructive dialogue is within reach, and that we should nourish these relations for the sake of humanity and to create a better future for our children and future generations to come.

End text of statement.
RICCIARDONE